



Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center

Parent & Student Handbook

2026–2027

Our Mission

We are committed to providing young children with meaningful learning experiences in a safe, nurturing, and Christ-centered environment. Our program seeks to meet each child at their individual developmental level and to support continued growth in the physical, academic, social, and emotional areas of development. We believe a well-balanced, age-appropriate curriculum fosters a strong sense of individual worth and confidence, laying a foundation for lifelong learning and future success.

Safety, Health, and Well-Being

The safety, health, and well-being of every child entrusted to our care is of the utmost importance to us. We understand the responsibility and honor of caring for your child each day and value the trust you place in our program.

Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center is a locked-door facility and utilizes camera systems in classrooms, hallways, and playground areas as well as additional safety measures. We also use **Brightwheel**, a secure communication platform that allows families to receive updates, classroom activities, and information regarding their child's progress. Brightwheel also provides a safe and convenient way to manage tuition billing and electronic payments.

Children's Learning Center Office Hours

Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Administrative Director

Mrs. Kaci Roberts

Phone: (864) 582-2068

Email: clcdirector@stpumc.org

Assistant Director

Mrs. Reanna Abernathy

Phone: (864) 582-5290

Email: assistantdirector@stpumc.org

Written Confidentiality Policy

At Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center, we take the confidentiality of our students' written records very seriously. The following guidelines help ensure that your child's information is always protected:

1. **Records Security:** All records, including attendance and other personal information, remain on-site at Saint Paul and are only released in response to a legal requirement such as a subpoena, court order, or statute.
2. **Parent Access:** Parents or legal guardians may request to view their child's records at any time. However, records may not be removed or copied.
3. **Safeguarding Information:** Records are always kept secure. They should never be left unattended with parents, family members, or visitors.
4. **Storage of Records:** Primary student records are securely stored in the office in a locked file cabinet. Copies of essential information needed by staff, such as emergency contact details, are safely stored in each classroom.

This policy ensures that your child's information remains confidential and protected while allowing staff access only when necessary to provide care and ensure safety.

Holiday and School Breaks

During the year, the Children's Learning Center may remain open on certain days when public schools are closed. Children enrolled in full-day programs are welcome to attend these days, and attendance is included in monthly tuition.

Families enrolled in the After School Program should note that an additional fee will apply for these days, as standard after-school tuition covers only school-day pick-up services.

Children's Learning Center Programs

1. Full-day childcare is offered for children aged 12 weeks through 4 years.
2. Priority enrollment is given to Saint Paul UMC church members and current Learning Center and/or After School families. Remaining openings are filled using the waiting list, followed by availability to the general community.
3. The placement of each child is based on their age as of September 1st of the calendar year.

After School Program

3. Children must be enrolled in kindergarten (5K) through 5th grade and attend elementary school.
4. Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center provides after-school pick-up from Jesse Boyd Elementary School and Pine Street Elementary School.
5. Families whose children attend other elementary schools must provide transportation to the Learning Center in order to participate in the After School Program.

Wait List Policy

Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center maintains a wait list for families seeking enrollment. When openings become available, families on the wait list are contacted in order of placement.

Childcare Program Withdrawal

Parents are required to provide the Administrative Director with a **30-day written notice** of their intent to withdraw their child(ren) from any Learning Center program.

At the conclusion of the 30-day notice period, the Administrative Director will determine any remaining tuition or fee balance and review payment options with the family. All prepaid tuition and fees will be applied to the final balance. **No refunds are issued for unused tuition or fees.**

Billing, Tuition and Fees Policy

All tuition and applicable fees are billed monthly through Brightwheel. Payments may be made electronically through Brightwheel or by check submitted in person at the Children's Learning Center office.

- Monthly tuition is due no later than the last day of each month.
- A late fee equal to 10% of any unpaid balance will be assessed if payment is not received by the due date.
- Any outstanding balance, including late fees, must be paid in full by the 15th of the following month.
- Tuition reserves your child's space in the program and is not based on daily attendance. This policy allows for consistent staffing, classroom planning, and program operations.
- Families experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to contact the Administrative Director as soon as possible to discuss available payment options. Our goal is to work in partnership with families while maintaining the financial stability of our program.
- A fee of \$30 will be added to your child(s) account for any returned check(s).

We appreciate your cooperation and continued partnership.

Medical & Accidental Policy

At Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center, the health and safety of your child are our top priorities. A sick child cannot always receive the care and attention they need while at school. To protect your child and others, the following guidelines must be followed:

Illness Guidelines

Children exhibiting any of the following symptoms cannot attend the program until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours or 24 hours after beginning medical treatment prescribed by a physician:

1. Fever of 100.3°F or higher
2. Diarrhea (two or more occurrences)
3. Unidentified rashes or rashes not diagnosed by a physician (attendance requires a medical exam confirming it is not communicable)
4. Vomiting (one occurrence)
5. Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)
6. Chickenpox – all blisters must be dry and crusted before returning
7. Impetigo of the skin
8. Severe cold with fever and colored nasal discharge

Children with these symptoms may be contagious and/or have a lowered resistance to illness. While we will miss them, we look forward to welcoming them back once they are well.

Important: If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be notified, and your child must be picked up within one hour.

Accident Policy

While we strive to maintain a safe environment, accidents can occur during normal play or activities.

- Minor injuries (scrapes, scratches, bruises, or other small injuries) will be treated at school, and you will be notified upon arrival.
 - Major injuries (head injuries, falls, or injuries requiring immediate attention) will prompt immediate notification to you.
 - All incidents will be documented in our Accident Logbook.
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Medical Authorization

I have read and understand the Saint Paul UMC Children’s Learning Center Medical & Accident Policy. I agree to comply with its conditions.

I understand that every effort will be made to contact me in the event of illness or injury. However, if I cannot be reached, I give permission to Saint Paul UMC Children’s Learning Center to seek necessary medical services for my child.

Health Requirements and Immunizations

All children must meet state-required immunization and health documentation guidelines. Families will be notified of any communicable illnesses that they are aware of. A child may return to care once they are symptom-free and able to participate in daily activities, or as guided by the doctor and doctor’s note.

Medication Policy

- If a child requires medication during hours of operation, a doctor’s note with specific instructions and administration times must be provided. **No controlled substances will be administered.**

- A completed medication authorization form must accompany medication each day it is administered.
 - Medication must be given directly to the Administrative Director or Assistant Director. Please do not leave medication with classroom teachers or staff.
 - Medication may not be sent in a child's bag or lunch box and must be picked up daily. Medication cannot be stored overnight.
 - EpiPens and other life-saving medications must remain at the facility for the duration of the child's enrollment.
 - Breathing treatments may be administered once per day with a doctor's note.
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Weather Closures and Delays Policy

At Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center, the safety of our children, families, and staff is our highest priority. We recognize that weather-related disruptions can be challenging and are committed to making thoughtful, well-communicated decisions.

Decision-Making Criteria

Closures or delays may occur due to, but are not limited to: - Severe weather (snow, ice, flooding, hurricanes, tornado warnings, or extreme temperatures) - Unsafe travel conditions - Local or state emergency advisories - Utility outages (power, water, heating, or cooling)

While district decisions (Spartanburg D7) may be considered, the Learning Center operates independently and may not always follow public school closures. **Tuition remains unchanged during weather closures.**

Tuition and Make-Up Days

Tuition credits or make-up days are not typically provided for weather-related closures, as staffing and operational costs continue. Exceptions may be considered at the discretion of administration and the CLC Board during extended closures.

Transportation Policy — Field Trips & Afterschool Pick-Up

Parental Permission

- Written consent from a parent/guardian is required for all field trips and any transportation by staff or approved drivers.
- Consent forms must specify the destination, dates, and emergency contacts.

Driver & Vehicle Requirements

- Only licensed and screened drivers may transport children.
- Vehicles must be safe, properly maintained, and equipped with age-appropriate child restraints for each child.
- Seat belts or car seats must be always used while the vehicle is in motion.

Supervision & Ratios

- Staff-to-child ratios required by state regulations must be maintained during transport.
- Children must be supervised during boarding, exiting, and throughout the trip.

Safety & Emergency Procedures

- A first aid kit, emergency contacts, and child attendance lists must be in the vehicle.
- Staff must follow written emergency plans for vehicle breakdowns, accidents, or medical emergencies.
- Children must remain seated, follow staff instructions, and avoid behavior that could jeopardize safety.

Field Trips

- Itineraries and staff assignments are documented in advance.
 - Children are accounted for at all stops, including departure and arrival.
 - Parents are welcome to attend but may only transport their own child unless otherwise approved.
 - Children under 3 years of age will not be allowed to attend field trips or be driven on any school bus, unless there is a need for emergency evacuation.
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Arrival, Departure, and Authorized Pick-Up

To ensure the safety of all children, families are required to follow established arrival and departure procedures. Children will be signed in and out daily by a teacher or authorized adult. Proper identification may be requested at pick-up. Only individuals listed on the child's authorized pick-up form may retrieve a child. Late pick-up may result in additional fees of \$20 for the first 15 minutes, and additional \$5 per minute after the first 15 minutes as outlined by the Learning Center.

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center uses positive, age-appropriate guidance rooted in Christian values such as respect, kindness, forgiveness, and self-control. Staff members redirect behavior, model appropriate conduct, and work collaboratively with families to support each child's growth. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

Attendance and Absenteeism

Regular attendance supports consistency and learning. Families are asked to notify the Learning Center when a child will be absent. Extended or repeated absences may impact enrollment status. Tuition is not adjusted for absences, vacations, or holidays.

Safety Procedures: Intruder & Lockdown

At Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center, the safety of our children and staff is our highest priority. We have procedures in place to respond quickly and effectively to any potential security concerns.

Intruder Procedures

- If a suspicious person is on campus, staff will guide them to the office and, if necessary, contact authorities immediately.
- Exterior doors always remain locked. Staff do not open doors for unknown visitors and will direct them to the office.
- The director is notified immediately of any security concerns.

Lockdown Procedures

In the event of a lockdown, the following measures are followed:

- Only the director will announce a lockdown. During this time, **no one may enter or exit the building**, including parents.
- Staff and children remain in their classrooms. Doors are secured, children are moved out of sight, and classrooms are kept as quiet as possible.
- Staff communication by phone is limited until it is safe to do so, to avoid confusion or panic.
- Movement or evacuation will only occur under the direction of administrators or first responders.
- Parents will be notified once the situation is resolved and the building is safe.

These procedures are practiced regularly to ensure that all staff and children know how to respond calmly and safely.

Child Protection and Mandated Reporting

Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center is committed to the safety and protection of every child. Staff members are mandated reporters and are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities in accordance with South Carolina law.

Toys from Home Policy

We recognize that children may find comfort in bringing personal items or favorite toys from home. However, to maintain a structured, safe, and distraction-free learning environment, toys from home are not permitted at school **unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher**.

Items brought from home can create disruptions in the classroom, lead to conflicts among children, and may be lost or damaged. For these reasons, families are asked to ensure that all toys and non-essential personal items remain at home.

-If a child requires a comfort item, please communicate with your child's teacher to determine what is appropriate for use during rest time.

Clothing, Personal Belongings, and Supplies

Children should wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing suitable for playing. Families are encouraged to label all personal items. Toys and personal electronics from home are discouraged unless specifically requested. The Learning Center is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.

Special Classroom Activities

We love celebrating special moments with our children, especially birthdays! Families are welcome to provide a simple treat to enjoy during your child's scheduled snack time. To help keep celebrations safe and enjoyable for everyone, please follow these guidelines:

- Submit a list of all food items to your child's teacher a few days in advance so we can review any allergies (required by DSS).
- Simple, easy-to-serve items such as mini cupcakes, small cake squares, or pre-packaged snacks (pretzels, goldfish, chips) are encouraged.
- For safety reasons, popcorn is not permitted for preschool-aged children.

If you are distributing invitations for an off-site party at school, we kindly ask that all classmates be included. For privacy, we cannot share children's personal information, but we are happy to assist by addressing and mailing invitations if needed.

Peanut Free Policy

To ensure the health and safety of all children in our care, Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center maintains a **peanut-free environment**. Some children in our program have severe allergies, which can be life-threatening even with minimal exposure.

Guidelines for Families:

- Please **do not send any food items containing peanuts** with your child. This includes snacks, lunch items, and baked goods.
- Read labels carefully to avoid accidental exposure, as some products may contain traces of nuts.
- Encourage your child to wash hands before and after eating if they have handled food from home.

Center Responsibilities:

- Staff will ensure that classrooms and common areas remain free from peanut products.
- Special care will be taken during activities involving food to prevent cross-contact.
- Families will be notified in advance of any classroom events or parties where food is provided.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding. By working together, we create a safe and inclusive environment where every child can learn, play, and grow without risk of allergic reactions.

Potty Training Policy

It is the Learning Center's policy that all children entering our three (3) year old program and above be potty trained. *Appendix A* of this handbook provides "**Julie Fellom's Diaper Free Toddlers Program,**" which we strongly encourage families to follow prior to the start of the new school year to help children prepare for this transition.

We understand that accidents may occasionally occur as children adjust to a classroom routine. However, if a child has three (3) toileting incidents within one week, the child will need to remain home and may return to school three (3) days after the last incident that occurred at the Learning Center.

If the third incident of the week occurs and the child is picked up that morning, that same day will be counted as the first day of the three-day period. If the third incident occurs in the afternoon, the following day will be counted as Day One (1).

Our goal is to partner with families to support each child in becoming confident and successful with independent toileting while maintaining a comfortable and hygienic classroom environment for all children.

Biting and Discipline Policy

The Learning Center is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for all children. Our staff works diligently to prevent, redirect, and address biting and other aggressive behaviors through close supervision, guidance, and age-appropriate intervention.

While we understand that young children are still learning how to express emotions and interact appropriately with others, behaviors such as biting, hitting, kicking, or other forms of aggression cannot be tolerated when they place another child or staff member at risk. When these behaviors occur, staff will respond promptly to ensure the safety of all children and will work with the child to help them learn appropriate ways to express their needs and feelings.

Appendix B of this handbook outlines the specific procedures and steps followed by the Learning Center regarding incidents of biting. We encourage families to review this information carefully. If you have any questions or need clarification about the policy, please feel free to ask a member of our staff.

Our goal is to partner with families to guide children toward positive behaviors while maintaining a safe and supportive environment for everyone in our care.

Corporal Punishment and Discipline Policy

In accordance with regulations established by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS), corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at the Learning Center. At no time will staff use physical punishment, harsh treatment, humiliation, or any form of discipline that may harm a child physically or

emotionally. Our staff uses only non-punitive, developmentally appropriate methods of discipline and always provides guidance in a positive and respectful manner. Unsupervised isolation is not permitted.

Our goal is to help children learn appropriate behaviors while maintaining a safe and supportive environment. Discipline may include redirection, guidance, restitution when appropriate, and “time out” when necessary. Time out is used as a brief opportunity for a child to calm down and regain self-control. It typically consists of one (1) minute for each year of the child’s age. For example, a three (3) year old would receive three (3) minutes in time out. Time out is always supervised by a staff member.

For older children, particularly in after-school or summer programs, additional guidance strategies may be used when appropriate. This may include being asked to choose another area to play in, writing sentences, or writing a letter of apology if repeated time outs have occurred or if the situation calls for reflection and accountability. Younger children may simply be redirected to another activity or area of the Learning Center to help them reset and re-engage positively.

If more serious or repeated behavioral concerns arise, they will be addressed according to the Learning Center’s Discipline Policy. In these situations, the matter may be discussed with the child’s parents or guardians, the Administrative Director, and the Preschool Board Chairperson to determine appropriate next steps and supportive strategies.

Our goal is always to work in partnership with families to help children grow and succeed. However, if a behavioral concern cannot be resolved and the safety or well-being of others is affected, the Learning Center reserves the right to remove the child from the program. If a child is removed from the program as a disciplinary action, no portion of fees already paid for the current month will be refunded.

Photography, Media, and Social Media

Photographs and videos may be taken for classroom communication, documentation, or promotional purposes. Families may opt out of media use by submitting a written request to administration.

Faith-Based Program Statement

As a ministry of Saint Paul United Methodist Church, Saint Paul UMC Children’s Learning Center provides a Christ-centered program grounded in Christian values. Children are introduced to faith through age-appropriate prayer, Bible stories, chapel experiences, music, and daily practices that encourage kindness, compassion, respect, and love for others.

We welcome families of all backgrounds while remaining firmly rooted in our Christian mission. Our goal is to create an inclusive and nurturing environment where each child feels valued, supported, and encouraged to grow spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally.

Parental Cooperation Policy

A positive, respectful, and cooperative relationship between families and the Learning Center is essential to fulfilling our mission and providing the best care for all children. We expect all interactions—both within and outside of the Learning Center—to remain respectful and constructive.

If a parent or guardian’s behavior, communication, or interactions are disruptive, intimidating, overly aggressive, or demonstrate a significant lack of trust or cooperation with the Learning Center’s policies, procedures, or leadership, the Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss the family from Saint Paul UMC Children’s Learning Center.

These expectations are in place to ensure a safe, supportive, and professional environment for our children, families, and staff.

Volunteers, Visitors, and Classroom Access

All visitors must sign-in upon arrival. Volunteers may be subject to background checks and approval prior to classroom participation; this is in accordance with DSS state regulations and standards from Saint Paul UMC Children’s Learning center.

Termination of Care

The Learning Center reserves the right to terminate care for reasons including, but not limited to, non-payment of tuition, repeated policy violations, improper care of children, or safety concerns. Families will be provided with written notice when possible.

Parent Acknowledgement

Parents are required to sign an annual acknowledgement confirming receipt and understanding of this handbook and agreement to comply with all policies.

Our Commitment

We strive to make decisions rooted in care, preparedness, faith, and respect for families. Thank you for your trust and partnership as we work together to provide a safe, loving, and Christ-centered learning environment for every child and family. We look forward to this partnership with you as your child grows, learns, and thrives before going to “Big school”.

Potty Training Bootcamp Julie Fellom's "Diaper Free Toddlers Program"

Day One

Get up with your child as soon as he wakes up. For the rest of the day, have him go naked below the waist. You and your partner spend the day taking turns watching your child for signs that he needs to pee or poop. When he starts to go, whisk him to the nearest potty. Throughout the day, have everyone eat salty snacks or foods with high water content and drink a lot of liquids so they have to pee often. Any time you or your partner needs to use the bathroom, take your child in with you. Demonstrate how you pull down your pants and underwear, sit on the potty, pee or poop into it, wipe yourself, pull up your underwear and pants, flush the toilet and wash your hands. Celebrate your child's success any time he gets a "hit" on the potty - meaning that some amount of pee or poop, even a few drops, goes into the potty rather than on the floor. When this happens, do your potty dance. You can also give praise, high-fives and so on.

After 10 to 12 hits, Fellom says that kids usually get it and start to use the potty independently.

If your child has an accident, DON'T SAY, "It's OK." Instead, say in a mildly disappointed voice, "Poop/Pee goes in the potty," and help your child clean it up by placing your hand over his. But don't yell at him or shame him for having accidents: They will happen.

Before nap time and bedtime, tell your child it's time to go potty (never ask your child, because he'll usually say no). Put a diaper on your child before he goes to sleep, unless you feel confident that he'll remain dry.

Day Two

Follow the instructions for day one. The only difference is that on day two, you can all go outside together for one hour in the after noon. Wait until your child pees in the potty, then head out immediately. "You want to link using the potty with getting to leave the house," Fellom says. This way, you can "train you child to pee on command" before you go out. When you go out, have your child wear loose pants with nothing underneath - do diapers, training pants or underwear. Your goal is to make it out and home accident-free, without having to use the potty while you're out, but bring spare clothes in case you're not so lucky. Fellom advises sticking close to home and not going in the car. Take a walk in your neighborhood (even just around the block) or head to a nearby park. Bring a portable travel potty with you, in case your child says he needs to go while you're out, but that's fairly unlikely at this early stage.

Day Three

Follow the instructions for day one, but on day three, your family can go out for an hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon. Each time, have your child use the potty just before leaving the house. Again, when you're out, have your child wear loose pants with nothing underneath. Bring your travel potty and a change of clothes.

After Potty Training Weekend

After the long weekend, expect that your child will usually take himself to the potty when he has to go, or tell you or your partner that he needs to do so. But to seal the deal, some follow-up needs to happen... For the next three months, have your child go naked below the waist when you're at home. (You can use diapers for naptime and nighttime as needed.) When out - including daycare - have your child wear loose pants with nothing underneath. Fellom believes that training pants and underpants feel like diapers to a child and that using them before three months have passed encourages your child to start peeing in them again. After three months with no accidents, your child can start wearing underpants and no longer needs to go bare-bottomed at home. When you're out and about, keep your portable travel potty in the car and be aware of public bathrooms nearby. You can use a potty training seat on public bathrooms nearby. You can use a potty training seat on public toilets if you like (the kind that fits over the toilet seat and helps kids feel more secure on adult-size toilets), but it's not necessary. Instead, just help steady your child on the toilet and wash your hands and your child's afterward.

Biting Policy

Purpose

To protect the children at Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center Programs and to encourage children to behave in a socially acceptable manner.

Procedures

- We recognize that biting is a common behavior in young children and may occur for a variety of developmental reasons.
- Staff will use developmentally appropriate strategies, such as redirection, close supervision, and positive guidance, to help prevent and reduce biting incidents.
- If a biting incident occurs, staff will immediately clean the affected area with soap and water, provide comfort to the injured child, apply a cold compress if needed, and notify the parents or guardians of both children. The identity of the children involved will remain confidential.
- All biting incidents will be documented and reviewed to identify patterns and help prevent future occurrences.

Children older than 24 months

If a child over the age of twenty-four (24) months bites three (3) times within the same school week, the child's parent or guardian will be contacted and required to pick up the child immediately.

After being sent home, the child may not return to the Children's Learning Center on the following school day. The child may return on the second school day after the incident, provided they are able to participate safely in the program. Our goal is to maintain a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment for every child in our care.

Children under 24 months

Due to the developmental appropriateness behavior at this age, the staff will provide teething rings to help soothe during this time. At this age, children are curious and learning through exploratory play. It is at this moment that the staff are teaching them how to challenge their energy, feelings and frustrations by providing developmentally appropriate activities and/or props to help redirect them before biting

When a child is less than the age of twenty-four (24) months and bites five (5) times within a school week time period, the child's parents will be called, and the child must be picked up from the Children's Learning Center.

After being sent home, the child may not return to the Children's Learning Center on the following school day. The child may return on the second school day after the incident, provided they are able to participate safely in the program.



Receipt of Parent/ Student Handbook

I, _____, agree to follow the policies and procedures
(parent's printed name)
contained in this Parent/Student Handbook 2026-2027. All policies and procedures are implemented by the Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center Board and enforced by the Administrative Director and Assistant Director.

Please initial each item and sign below

- _____ I understand that if I/We fail to follow Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center policies and Procedures, my/our child/children may be removed from the program
- _____ I understand and agree to adhere to tuition payment agreement
- _____ I understand and agree to adhere to the policies outlined dealing with illnesses and medications
- _____ I understand the Medical Policy set in place by Saint Paul UMC CLC
- _____ I give permission for Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center to photograph my child/children for display in scrapbooks, bulletin boards and classroom projects; for use in promotional materials such as the church newsletter or to post on the school's webpage or private Facebook social media pages. Only first names will be used with the exception of preauthorized parental approval for specific projects
- _____ I understand that Saint Paul UMC Children's Learning Center playground and gym facilities will be used by the children
- _____ I understand the confidentiality policy set in place by Saint Paul UMC CLC
- _____ I understand the Potty-Training Policy set in place by Saint Paul UMC CLC
- _____ I understand the Biting Policy set in place by Saint Paul UMC CLC

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____